

With the EPA and other federal, state and local agencies set to meet on Friday in Chicago to discuss methods to block Asian carp from advancing toward the Great Lakes, Rep. Debbie Halvorson (IL-11), and members of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce Infrastructure Council were joined by Rep. Judy Biggert, (IL-13), and Rep. Danny Davis (IL-7) to present a set of priorities for addressing the threat that will provide for a balanced approach to protect Illinois jobs.

"We need to make sure the economic impact that any potential lock closure would have is well known. There are Illinois jobs and families that depend on our waterways, and closure of the locks isn't an option. Even reduced operation of the locks will have a devastating impact on our region's economy and would result in a loss of jobs and higher prices for consumers," said Halvorson.

"These locks help us move a lot of goods - a study showed that if the corn industry alone had to begin shipping their products on highways instead of our waterways, it would cost an additional \$500 million a year. That's unacceptable, and those are costs that would be passed down to consumers," said Halvorson.

The event comes after a report released by the *Asian Carp Workgroup* suggested reduced operation of Chicago-area shipping locks as a potential tactic-an untested move that could threaten good-paying Illinois jobs. The report, released from an interagency taskforce made up of representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the IL Department of Natural Resources, includes a proposal that could restrict the flow of commerce through the Illinois waterways, forcing millions of tons of goods onto already clogged roadways and threaten Illinois jobs.

Halvorson, whose district covers much of the Illinois waterway system and businesses and employees that depend on the Chicago-area locks, added "Addressing the problem of Asian carp in our waterways is important, but as long as there are other solutions than lock closures, we must pursue strategies that would protect Illinois businesses and jobs. Closing the locks should not be an option, and in this time of economic uncertainty, businesses need to know they can rely on this environmentally friendly, economical transportation option. They need to be able to plan for it. We need to stand together in a bipartisan fashion to stand up for the working men and women of this state to solve this problem in a balanced way that protects both our ecosystem and our jobs."

"We need to recognize that if we are to recover economically we must give businesses a

commitment that lock closures are not an option," said Jim Farrell, Executive Director of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce Infrastructure Council. "This is the equivalent of asking airlines to invest in O'Hare when at the same time you are contemplating closing the CTA Blue Line train and Interstate spur 190."